

Amendments to the Claims

1 – 18 (Cancelled)

19. (New) A retroreflective material of the kind referred to in comprising a coating and a plurality of beads, the coating being applied to at least portion of the plurality of beads to produce or enhance retroreflectivity of the plurality of the beads and which bridges at least some of gaps between the plurality of beads, the coating being treated and/or removed to produce areas of contrast.

20. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in which the coating is removed selectively so that the areas of contrast represent patterning and/or graphical and/or pictorial matter.

21. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in which the coating bridging substantially all of the gaps between the beads is removed or treated.

22. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in a form of a tape.

23. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in a form of a sheet.

24. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in which the coating has been removed in such a way as to expose an underlying substrate.

25. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 24 in which the underlying substrate is colored.

26. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in which the areas of contrast are produced by chemical treatment of the coating.

27. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 26 in which the chemical treatment involves coloring of the coating.

28. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in which the coating is metal based.

29. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in which the coating has been affected by metallization.

30. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 19 in which the coating comprises a medium containing elements imparting retroreflectivity.

31. (New) The material as claimed in Claim 30 in which the elements comprise metal flake or mica.

32. (New) A method of modifying an appearance of a retroreflective material of the kind referred to comprising the steps of:

supplying a plurality of beads;

applying a coating to at least a portion of the plurality of beads to produce or enhance retroreflectivity of the plurality of the beads and to bridge at least some of gaps between the plurality of beads; and

treating and/or removing at least a portion of the coating to produce areas of contrast..

33. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 32 in which the areas of contrast correspond to

desired patterning and/or graphical and/or pictorial matter.

34. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 32 wherein the step of treating and/or removing at least a portion of the coating to produce areas of contrast includes using a medium capable of being applied by a contact or non-contact printing technique and capable of dissolving or otherwise rendering metal removable or changing a visual appearance.

35. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 32 wherein the step of treating and/or removing at least a portion of the coating to produce areas of contrast includes rendering treated portions of the coating visibly distinct from the coating adhered directly to the beads.

36. (New) The method as claimed in Claim 35, wherein the step of treating and/or removing at least a portion of the coating to produce areas of contrast includes removing the coating in parts and in which said treatment is such as to result in the treated portions of the coating being visibly distinguishable from those areas from which the coating has been removed.